

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF WISCONSIN

Universal Service Fund Council

SUMMARY OF FEBRUARY 8, 2012 MEETING

Meeting Date/Time: February 8, 2012, 1:00 p.m.

Place: Public Service Commission Building, Pecatonica River Conf. Rm. - Madison, WI

Universal Service Fund Council (USFC) members present: Jean Pauk – TDS Telecom, Jason Meyer – Avada, Jill Collins- AT&T, David Byers – NEIT Wireless, Kathy Schmitt – DATCP; Bob Kellerman – GWAAR, Bob Jones – WISCAP Assoc.

USFC members on phone: Pam Sherwood – tw telecom

PSC personnel participating: Chela O'Connor, Jeff Richter, Peter Jahn, Joyce Dingman

Other persons present: Sandy Stanley – Wipfli, Kerry Malak – CCHD, Brad Dodson – Hitec, Matt Thompson, Jack Cassell – DOA, Meta Cucinotta – DHS, and Linda Huffer – DHS

Introductions

Jean Pauk called the meeting to Order at 1:05 PM. Participants introduced themselves.

Vendor Guidelines: Review and Vote on Proposed Changes: Approved as amended. The Council discussed the proposed Vendor Guidelines and suggested a change to the language regarding how a Vendor will inform the program administrator of its financial relationships and update the list as it changes. In addition, the Council recommended requiring the inclusion of a mailing address to the signature page. Ms. Schmitt moved to approve the Vendor Guidelines as amended, Ms. Collins seconded, the motion passed. Ms. O'Connor will distribute to all TEPP providers and they will be required to complete and return a signed agreement.

Schedule TEPP Subcommittee meeting: The Council talked about scheduling the TEPP Subcommittee meeting to review and update an approved equipment list, review new technologies, review special exceptions policies, and talk about budget considerations. Ms. O'Connor will schedule a meeting of the TEPP subcommittee.

Nonprofit Funding/Telemedicine Funding: The Council talked about the funding programs and that the nonprofit grant materials are available online and due February 15, 2012. Awards will be announced in April 2012 and these will be for 2012 fiscal year. There will not be any internet-type applications this round (due to Act 22, can only fund "voice" projects). Chela will distribute list of applicants to the Council. Ms. O'Connor indicated that she and Jeff Richter had visited Options for Independent Living and planned to do additional visits on an ongoing basis.

The Telemedicine grant materials are being developed and will be issued in April with a Commission decision expected in June for funding of grants for FY2012/13. The Council provided ideas about how to disseminate the information about the grants with the USF Manager.

PSC 160 Revision Progress: Ms. Dingman reported that the process is moving along nicely internally under docket 1-AC-236. Some changes will address Lifeline, LinkUp and ETC Designation portions of the Universal Service Fund rules.

ETC Issues – Several items were addressed regarding Eligible Telecommunications Carriers including the FCC's recent order eliminating federal funding for LinkUp. The Council discussed the possibility of an emergency rule regarding the state rules and the effect of the FCC action on the state fund. The Council will review any emergency rule should that be the process for dealing with the potential problems.

Wireless Lifeline & LinkUp Investigation – MTI's ETC status has been revoked and they are no longer operating in WI. Existing customers were transferred to another provider.

Budget Review: (Budget and Expenses to date) The Council reviewed the FY 2012 budget and the expenses to date. There were no surprises. The expenditures in some categories are slightly lower than expected but are expected to catch up and 2-line VCO is slightly higher than expected. Commission staff has been getting more questions from consumers and providers on this issue.

2nd Line for Voice and Hearing Carry-Over (2LVCO) Issues: Ms. O'Connor indicated that there have been a sharp increase in the number of complaints regarding the waiver of the cost for the 2nd Line for Voice and Hearing Carry-Over (2LVCO). Providers are indicating to customers that they do not offer this and staff has been reaching out to providers to help resolve the issues.

Communication/Awareness: – Online Training for Providers: Ms. O'Connor indicated that she will have a provider training program in July to address the 2LVCO as well as other issues. These include provider requirements for reimbursement from Wipfli, CARES database training, and an update on federal and state issues affecting USF.

National Deaf Blind Equipment Distribution Program (NDBEDP): Ms. O'Connor shared with the Council the Commission filed application in November to the FCC for certification and funding under its National Deaf Blind Equipment Distribution Program (NDBEDP) FCC. There is no news about the Certification yet. The USF together with the Wisconsin Department of Health Services Telecommunications Assistance Program, and Center for Deaf-Blind Persons, Inc. filed funding request for the Wisconsin Deaf-Blind Equipment Alliance (WiDBEA). Initial contact indicates monies will be available by July 1, 2012.

Universal Service Award for 2012: Ms. O'Connor raised the issue of creating a Universal Service Award to be presented by the Chairperson to recognize efforts of individuals who have made an impact in promoting Universal Service within Wisconsin. The Council agreed that this would be a good idea.

Universal Service Fund Council Structure and Role: The Council recommended that there be an orientation for new Council members and others agreed it may be helpful to provide a Universal Service Fund overview annually. There is also a need to fill vacancies on council and Ms. O'Connor is looking for suggestions.

The meeting adjourned at 3:27 pm.

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